

The Arthur Miller Years

Marilyn met Arthur Miller in 1955. A successful playwright and respected East Coast intellectual, Arthur Miller was opposite in temperament to the gregarious, fun-loving Marilyn.

Marilyn described Miller as being like Abraham Lincoln: tall, stern, someone she could count on and respect.

"Arthur. It was Arthur. He was why I stayed in New York. He was going to make my life different, better, a lot better," Marilyn told her friend Lena Pepitone. The year of their courtship was one of the happiest times for Marilyn. The traumas of Hollywood seemed far behind. She was the head of her own production company and absorbed in her studies at the

Marilyn, honeymooning in London with Arthur Miller in 1956, begins work on "The Prince and the Showgirl" (1957). Co-star Laurence Olivier is at right.



Actors Studio. The future was Arthur Miller — love, respect and protection.

Marilyn and Arthur were married in 1956. Although Marilyn's mother and her guardian Grace often talked about God, their faith was not rooted in any particular denomination. When Marilyn converted to Judaism (Arthur was Jewish), it did not represent a severe breaking with her own traditions. She enjoyed Arthur's parents and, to please them, tried to learn Yiddish and Jewish cooking. Her greatest hope was that she would have children who would be loved and absorbed into Arthur's family.

While working on "Some Like It Hot," Marilyn discovered she was pregnant; her return to New York with Arthur was joyous. She had longed for a child of her own, and now she looked forward to giving birth. She prepared a nursery and spent hours dreaming up names for the expected baby. Her pregnancy ended in a miscarriage, however, leaving Marilyn devastated. Later, she underwent surgery to enable her to carry a child, but unfortunately, the procedure did not produce the desired effect. Her inability to bear children tormented her for the rest of her life.

During the next three years, Marilyn and Arthur divided their time between their New York apartment and their farm in Connecticut. Arthur spent his days writing in his study; he seemed to work around the clock. Marilyn, though often frustrated by sitting home "alone," was always respectful of his need for solitude while working. When guests and business associates came to their home, she would entertain quietly so as not to disturb him.

Still under contract to Twentieth Century-Fox, Marilyn accepted a role in "Let's Make Love" (1960) opposite Yves Montand. It was a regression for Marilyn as an actress. Again, she was the brainless, sexy woman out to snag a man.

The period during the filming of "Let's Make Love" was a very difficult one for Arthur and Marilyn. Arthur had become even more reclusive since working on his new screenplay which, ironically, was written for Marilyn.



With perspiring husband Arthur Miller at the premiere of "The Prince and the Showgirl" (1957).

Based on a character similar to Marilyn, it was to be a full-blown dramatic part, a vehicle for her new screen career. Marilyn, more and more upset by his inattentiveness, began to suffer from recurrent depression.

Despite the strains in their relationship, they planned to go ahead with the new movie Arthur had written.

"The Misfits" (1961) is thought to be Arthur Miller's affectionate biography of his wife. The first description of Roslyn (Marilyn's part) is of a "golden girl," beautiful but vulnerable with "A part of her . . . totally alone, like a little child in a new school, mystified as to how it got here and passionately looking for a friendly face."

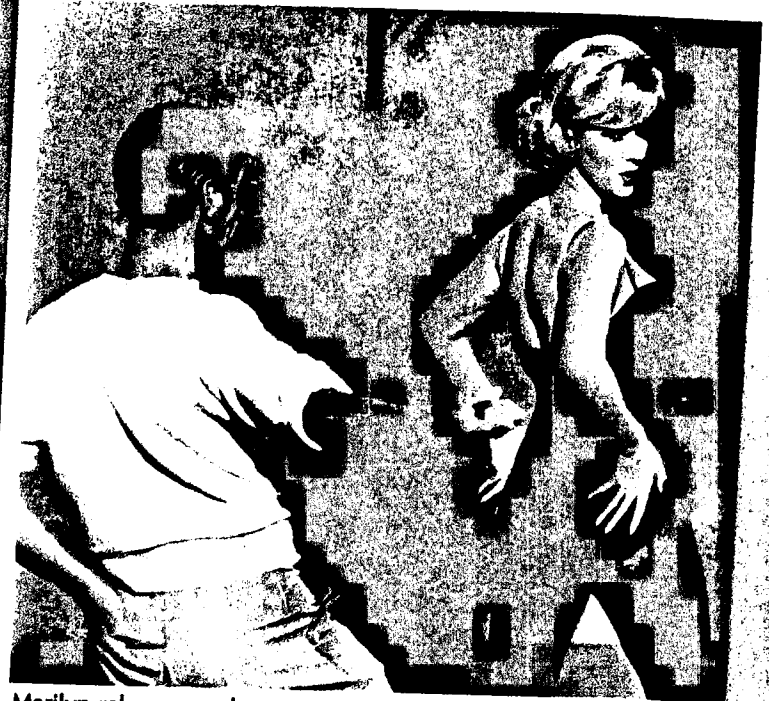
Directed by John Huston, with Clark Gable, Montgomery Clift, Eli Wallach and Thelma Ritter as co-stars, "The Misfits" is about

Friendly directorial advice from Billy Wilder on the set of "Some Like It Hot" (1959).





Marilyn relaxes with husband Arthur Miller and dialogue coach Paula Strasberg on location for "Some Like It Hot" (1959).



Marilyn rehearses a dance routine with choreographer Jack Cole in "Let's Make Love" (1960).

The cast and crew of "Let's Make Love" (1960) help Marilyn celebrate her 32nd birthday. Director George Cukor adorns her with a necklace while co-star Yves Montand looks on.



a sensitive divorcee who falls in love with one of the last American cowboys (Clark Gable).

During the filming in Nevada, Marilyn had trouble with John Huston and with her husband. She wanted to do certain scenes her way, and it was Clark Gable, not Arthur, who pushed for her and protected her.

It had often been Marilyn's childhood fantasy that Clark Gable was her real father. Playing opposite him rekindled her youthful affection and admiration for him. As she had imagined, he was someone she could count on. (Tragically, eleven days after filming, Clark Gable died of a heart attack.)

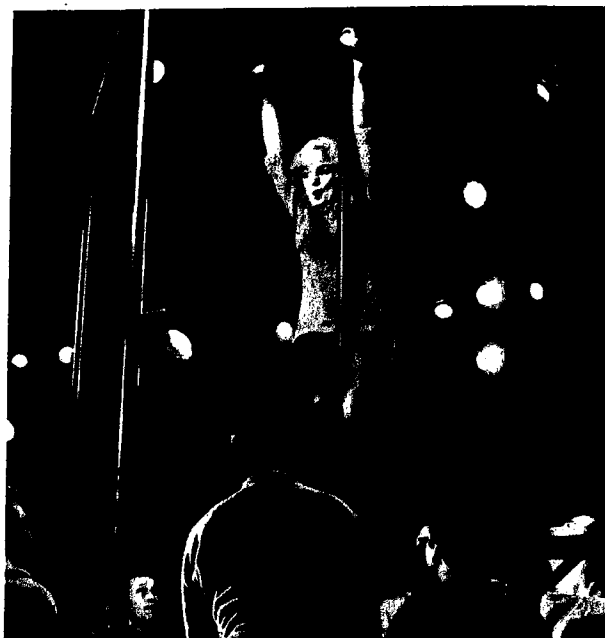
Marilyn was not happy with the script of "The Misfits." She thought it a strange, gloomy story.

There is a scene in the movie where the cowboys round up a group of wild horses they are planning to kill. Roslyn clearly identifies with the abused and soon to be annihilated animals. But she is helpless, ineffectual; her anger funneled into an attack of hysteria. She screams on the sidelines while the men fight the horses.

For a movie that was supposed to bring her dignity, "The Misfits" seemed to Marilyn shy of the mark. She began further to distrust and fight with Arthur. At times, she had the feeling that he and John Huston were conspiring against her. During one argument, she said to Arthur, "It's not your movie, it's ours. You wrote it, but you said you wrote it for me. Now you say it's all yours. You lied. You lied."

Later, speaking of Arthur and John Huston she said, "It's their movie. It's really about the cowboys and the horses. That's all they need. They don't need me at all. Not to act . . . just for the money. To put my name on the marquee."

When Marilyn returned to New York after filming "The Misfits," she returned alone. It was 1960; her marriage with Arthur was over.



Working on a scene from "Let's Make Love" (1960).

A moment with Arthur Miller during the filming of "The Misfits" (1961).



Valedictory

Some of the cynicism and bitterness that Marilyn harbored in the last few years of her life was evident even in her golden years, when fame was still fresh, her dreams of love and acceptance still alive.

The tone of her autobiography, written in the year of her marriage to Joe DiMaggio (1953) — a time when she stood at the threshold of worldwide fame — is of an abused underdog. After being wildly cheered by thousands of American troops during an entertainment tour of Korea, Marilyn writes: "My travels have always been of the same kind. No matter where I've gone or why I've gone there, it ends up that I never see anything. Becoming a movie star is living on a merry-go-round."

Even as an adult, it seemed Marilyn wanted to live the fantasies of Norma Jean.

As Roslyn in "The Misfits" (1961).



Movie stars were supposed to live glamorously; the hard work and tedium of being a star was disappointing. Perhaps in the most naive center of her being she thought she could live out one of her movie plots: by being seductive, she would capture the love of a handsome millionaire . . . their lives would be happy ever after.

From her childhood, she carried the feeling of being illegitimate — a phony movie star, a sex goddess, not an actress people accepted seriously. She would fight, but never transcend her "act." In life, people treated her as though she were a blonde dimwit, someone who would always bounce back after being trampled on, someone who was more a reflection of other people's egos than a person in her own right. After returning from her honeymoon in Japan, Marilyn writes in her autobiography: "People had a habit of looking at me as if I were some kind of mirror instead of a person. They didn't see me, they saw their own lewd thoughts, then they white-masked themselves by calling me the lewd one."

The years of living with tremendous internal conflict finally took its toll. In 1960, after Clark Gable's death, her mental and physical health began to deteriorate. To gain relief from disappointment, anger, and a feeling of helplessness, she turned to barbiturates and alcohol.

After one particularly hysterical fit of smashing glass and breaking mirrors, Marilyn committed herself to New York's Payne Whitney Clinic, a treatment center for alcoholism and mental illness. She was placed on a floor designed for the most disturbed patients and put under twenty-four-hour surveillance. Interestingly, she had registered not as Marilyn Monroe, or even as Norma Jean Baker, but as Fay Miller.

After a short time in the clinic, she was transferred to the Neurological Institute of the Columbia Presbyterian Medical Center where she remained for twenty-three days. While there, it is reported, she attempted suicide.

After she was released from the hospital, she went to work on another picture, "Some-

thing's Got to Give" directed by George Cukor, with Dean Martin and Cyd Charisse co-starring. Out of thirty-two days of filming, Marilyn was only on the set twelve days. As she was too ill to meet the film's shooting schedule, Twentieth Century-Fox, the studio with which she had been most associated, fired her. The film was never completed.

A few months before her death, Marilyn began to rally. She told an interviewer, "I feel that I am just getting started: I want to do comedy, tragedy."

Her life in California was relaxed. Her masseur, Ralph Roberts, a close friend, said that she was in better shape than she had been in years. Her body was toned, her outlook optimistic. Although still taking a little chloral hydrate, she had weaned herself from heavy sedation. "They've got me back to World War I stuff," she told Roberts.

It seemed she was coming out of seclusion. She did a series of photographs for *Vogue*, *Cosmopolitan* and an extensive interview with photos with Richard Meryman for *LIFE*. She was to appear on the front and back cover of *Playboy*, but at the last minute was advised by her agents to turn down the job. Even Twentieth Century-Fox, the studio that fired her from "Something's Got to Give," wanted her back.

Whether by accident or as a suicide, Marilyn Monroe died of an overdose of Nembutal on August 5, 1962. She was thirty-six years old.

Joe DiMaggio arranged her funeral. Only close friends were allowed at the ceremony, held in Westwood, California.

Lee Strasberg, who did so much to further her career as a serious actress, delivered the eulogy: "Others were as physically beautiful as she was, but there was obviously something more in her, something that people saw and recognized in her performances and with which they identified. She had a luminous quality — a combination of wistfulness, radiance, yearning — that set her apart and yet made everyone wish to be part of it, to share in the childish naivete which was at once so shy and yet so vibrant."



Marilyn, followed by Joe DiMaggio, seeks shelter from the public eye in Florida, 1961.

Watching Joe DiMaggio coach the N.Y. Yankees in Florida, 1961.

